Declassified and Approved For Release 2012/08/15 : CIA-RDP99-01448R000301220047-0

ARTICLE APPEARED ON PAGE A7

WASHINGTON POST
11 April 1986

Panel Approves Gates As CIA Deputy Director

Nominee Pledges to Try to Stem Leaks

By Tim Ahern
Associated Press

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence approved the nomination of Robert M. Gates as the new deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency yesterday, but first it got him to promise to try to reduce leaks to the press and to concede that the CIA botched its handling of a Soviet defector last year.

Gates was endorsed 10 to 0 after a rare public hearing by the Republican-controlled panel, which has been feuding with the Reagan administration over who is leaking national security secrets to news organizations.

Before his nomination to succeed John N. McMahon was sent to the Senate floor, Gates also defended the increasing use of covert action by the administration.

Gates, 42, is a career intelligence officer whose most recent post was deputy director for intelligence. CIA Director William J. Casey named him to the No. 2 slot after McMahon quit in February.

Several senators criticized leaks they said came from the executive branch about possible U.S. military actions against either terrorists or Libya, which the administration has claimed is a backer of terrorism.

"The way it's coming out is devastating to our national security," said Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.).

Sen. William S. Cohen (R-Maine) said some of the leaks appear to be politically motivated, and he disputed Gates' contention that the information is being leaked by low-level staffers.

Some of the information is coming "from the highest officials in the executive branch," said Cohen.

Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), vice chairman of the panel, told Gates that "many times, the information that has appeared in the press about intelligence has not only been earlier, but more complete, than official notice to the committee."

In response to the complaints, Gates said he thought most leaks were due to a "lack of discipline" by people with access to sensitive information.

He told the panel that "I'm pretty certain that some of the more significant leaks of the last few days have been reported to the FBI" for investigation.

"If they haven't, they will," he said, without detailing the specific cases he had in mind.

Gates also agreed with Cohen and Sen. Frank H. Murkowski (R-Alaska) that the CIA had mishandled the case of Vitaly Yurchenko, a former high-ranking KGB agent who had defected to the United States last year.

Yurchenko apparently became unhappy, walked out of a Georgetown restaurant Nov. 2, and then showed up two days later at the Soviet Embassy, claiming he had been drugged by the United States. He returned to the Soviet Union.

The CIA has changed its method of handling defectors so that a single case officer will now deal with a defector from the start to build rapport and try to sense trouble before it develops, Gates said. Yurchenko was appalled by leaks to the press about his case, Gates said.

He said that defectors have not been restrained in the past and they should not be restrained in the future, but he added that "we ought to step back a bit" from that policy and change it enough so "they can't just walk out the door and into the Soviet Embassy."

Gates also said he considered covert action "an appropriate instrument of foreign policy, as long as it is taken within a broader context."

BY JAMES K.W. ATHERTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Robert M. Gates is sworn in at hearing on his nomination for No. 2 CIA post.

Declassified and Approved For Release 2012/08/15 : CIA-RDP99-01448R000301220047-0